

Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

ESF Coordinator:

Department of Agriculture/Forest
Service

Primary Agency:

Department of Agriculture/Forest
Service

Support Agencies:

Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Homeland Security
Department of the Interior
Environmental Protection Agency

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 – Firefighting provides Federal support for the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an incident requiring a coordinated Federal response for assistance.

Scope

ESF #4 manages and coordinates firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provides personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State, tribal, and local agencies involved in rural and urban firefighting operations.

Policies

Priority is given to public and firefighter safety and protecting property, in that order.

Processes and procedures established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide and the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook are followed in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Framework.

National support is accomplished through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID. All support provided by the NICC will be coordinated with the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).

Coordination with and support of State and local fire suppression organizations is accomplished through the State Forester, in cooperation with the State Fire Marshal, State emergency management agency, or other appropriate State agency and/or tribal fire suppression organizations operating under the element of the NIMS Command and Management component.

The coordinator for ESF #4 is the Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Forest Service, at the headquarters level. For operations that occur in the State of Alaska, operational lead for firefighting response is the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management (DOI/BLM).

1 **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

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3 **General**

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5 ESF #4 manages and coordinates Federal firefighting activities. This function is accomplished
6 by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of State, tribal, and local wildland, rural, and
7 urban firefighting agencies.

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9 ESF #4 uses established firefighting and support organizations, processes, and procedures of
10 NIMS as outlined in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide. Responsibility for situation
11 assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with the local Incident
12 Commander.

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14 States have the option of requesting interstate and intrastate firefighting assistance and
15 resources, both utilizing existing agreements. Intrastate resources would be requested under
16 local or statewide mutual-aid agreements. Interstate resources would be requested through
17 the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), other compacts, or State-to-State
18 mutual-aid agreements.

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20 Requests for Federal assistance in obtaining firefighting resources for incidents other than
21 wildland fires are transmitted from the Joint Field Office (JFO) ESF #4 representative to the
22 appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC). For wildland fire incidents, requests
23 for assistance in obtaining firefighting resources are submitted as per the National Interagency
24 Mobilization Guide to the GACC and coordinated with the JFO. For resources beyond those
25 available within the geographic area, the requests are sent to the NICC in Boise, ID, by the
26 Geographical Area Coordinator. The NICC contacts the ESF #4 coordinator in the event of
27 national-level shortages or unavailability of needed resources.

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29 All Federal military personnel and resources for firefighting and incident management activities
30 will be requested through the NICC in coordination with the Defense Coordinating Officer and
31 the NRCC.

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33 Shortages of critical resources are adjudicated at the lowest jurisdictional level. If needed,
34 resolution would begin at the JFO, then progress to the NRCC, and then to the Domestic
35 Readiness Group (DRG).

36
37 Actual firefighting operations are managed under the ICS element of the NIMS Command and
38 Management component.

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40 Situation and damage assessment information is transmitted through established channels and
41 directly between the headquarters-level and regional-level functions according to NIMS
42 procedures.

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44 **ORGANIZATION**

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46 ESF #4 has a parallel structure at the national and regional levels.

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48 **Headquarters-Level Response Support Structure**

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50 The USDA Homeland Security Office represents the USDA/Forest Service on the DRG.

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52 The ESF #4 coordinator operates under the direction of the Assistant Director for Partnerships,
53 Fire and Aviation Management, USDA/Forest Service. Assistance is provided as necessary by
54 the USDA/Forest Service and DOI Fire Directors at the NIFC.

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The USDA/Forest Service Disaster and Emergency Operation Branch Chief serves as the ESF #4 coordinator. The ESF #4 coordinator or representative reports to and is a member of the NRCC, when activated. This position is the link to the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at USDA/Forest Service Headquarters.

The ESF #4 coordinator, through the NRCC, provides subject-matter expertise to the DRG. Based on recommended Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requirements, ESF #4 may be operational on a 24-hour basis.

ESF #4, through the NRCC, provides subject-matter expertise as needed. Supporting agencies have representatives available at the NRCC or by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis for the duration, as necessary.

The NICC provides national logistics support and mobilization of resources.

Regional-Level Response Support Structure

The regional/area ESF #4 coordinator provided by the USDA/Forest Service regional/area office coordinates Federal firefighting response support. The regional ESF #4 coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining coordination with the national ESF #4 coordinator, regional support agencies, and the JFO.

ESF #4, through the RRCC/JFO, provides subject-matter expertise as needed. Supporting agencies have representatives available at the RRCC/JFO on a 24-hour basis for the duration, as necessary.

GACCs provide regional firefighting response and logistics support.

Notification

Upon notification of a potential or actual event requiring ESF #4 response, the national ESF #4 coordinator notifies the Regional/Area Fire Coordinators, the NICC, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) Chief of Response Branch, and the DOI Departmental Emergency Coordinator.

ACTIONS

Preincident

National preparedness planning levels for wildland fire suppression are established by the National Multiagency Coordinating Group (NMAC) in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide.

Incident

Initial Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:

- Reports to the NRCC within 2 hours of notification.
- Establishes communication links with support agencies, the USDA Emergency Operations Center, the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at USDA/Forest Service Headquarters, and USDA/Forest Service Assistant Director – Operations at the NIFC.
- Establishes communication links with the Regional/Area Fire Coordinators.
- Obtains an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures; determines the appropriate management response to meet the request for assistance; and obtains and distributes incident contact information to emergency responders.
- Analyzes each request before committing people and other resources; and ensures employees will be provided with appropriate vaccinations, credentials, and personal protective equipment to operate in the all-hazard environment to which they are assigned.
- All-hazard incident-specific briefing and training will be accomplished prior to task implementation. This preparation will usually occur prior to mobilization where incident description, mission requirements, and known hazards are addressed. Key protective equipment and associated needs for tasks that employees do not routinely encounter or perform will be identified. This will be done—and be in place—prior to task implementation.

Postincident

Continuing Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:

- Obtains, maintains, and provides incident situation and damage assessment information through established procedures.
- Coordinates incident resource needs, and determines and resolves, as necessary, issues regarding resource shortages and resource ordering issues.
- Maintains close coordination through the NRCC with the DRG, RRCC, support agencies, NICC, and JFO.
- Maintains a complete log of actions taken, resource orders, records, and reports.

Recovery

Firefighting resources need to be managed and utilized appropriately so that they can be available for primary life saving, property protection, and incident stabilization assignments, or the Nation's capability to respond to new emergencies may be compromised.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ESF Coordinator/Primary Agency: USDA/Forest Service

- Provides qualified representatives to serve as ESF #4 coordinators at the national and regional/area levels.
- Provides support personnel at the NRCC and RRCC/JFO levels.
- Requests assistance from supporting agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF #4 responsibilities.
- Provides logistics support through the GACC and/or NACC for mobilizing resources for firefighting.
- Assumes full responsibility for suppression of wildfires burning on national forest system lands and joins in a unified command with the local jurisdiction on incidents threatening national forest system lands.
- Provides and coordinates firefighting assistance to other Federal land management, State forestry, and local fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the National Response Framework.
- Arranges for direct liaison with fire chiefs in the designated area to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire protection operations.
- Provides information to the Planning Section at the incident and the JFO as assessments of fire-caused damages are obtained.

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Agency	Functions
Department of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides fire/weather forecasting as needed from the NIFC in Boise, ID, or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements. Provides urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Provides fire/weather support under the terms of the National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities. Provides forecasts of the dispersion of smoke in support of planning and response activities.
Department of Defense (DOD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes full responsibility for firefighting activities on DOD installations. Supports firefighting operations on nonmilitary lands with personnel, equipment, and supplies under the terms of the current interagency agreement between DOD, USDA, and DOI, including the arrangement of liaisons as required. <p>DOD/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Provides contracting services through ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering to urban and rural firefighting forces to obtain heavy equipment and/or demolition services as needed to suppress incident-related fires.</p>
Department of Homeland Security	<p>DHS/Federal Emergency Management Agency/USFA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides subject-matter experts/expertise regarding structural/urban/suburban fire and fire-related activities. Maintains a representative at the NIFC to assist with national coordination. <p>DHS/U.S. Coast Guard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides marine firefighting assistance as available, commensurate with each unit's level of training and the adequacy of available equipment. Has the responsibility and direct authority for safeguarding ports and may exercise Federal control over vessels, ports, and harbors and waterfront facility operations and vessel movements as deemed necessary.
Department of the Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes full responsibility for fighting wildfires burning on lands within its jurisdiction. Assists the USDA/Forest Service in managing and coordinating firefighting operations. Provides firefighting assistance to other Federal land management organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the National Response Framework.
Environmental Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials. Provides assistance in identifying an uncontaminated, operational water source for firefighting. Provides assistance in identifying critical water systems requiring priority restoration for firefighting. Provides technical assistance on issues concerning the impacts of firefighting chemicals on wastewater treatment facilities.
Other Organizations	State forestry organizations in most States are responsible for wildland firefighting on non-Federal lands. States may assist other States in firefighting operations and may assist Federal agencies through agreements. In addition, resources may be provided through EMAC. Private-sector resources are mobilized through standard contract procedures.